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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000728

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV
COMMERCE FOR ITA JEAN KELLY
TREASURY FOR OASIA JEFF NEIL
USPACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/08/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER MAKES RARE EMBASSY VISIT

REF: RANGOON 719 AND PREVIOUS

CLASSIFIED BY: COM CARMEN MARTINEZ FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: A SURPRISE, BUT WELCOME, MEETING BETWEEN THE CHIEF OF MISSION AND THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER WAS MORE SIGNIFICANT FOR ITS OCCURRENCE THAN ITS CONTENT. NONETHELESS, DURING THE CORDIAL 30-MINUTE EXCHANGE THE COM PRESSURED FOR A ROLE FOR THE NLD IN THE "ROAD MAP FOR DEMOCRACY," AND HEARD VERIFICATION OF GOB INTENTION TO SIGN THREE ADDITIONAL UN COUNTERTERRORISM PROTOCOLS, THE LATEST GOB PERSPECTIVE ON THE ONGOING NATIONAL CONVENTION, AND ASSURANCES THAT THE SPDC REMAINED IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH ASSK. WE HOPE THIS IS THE FIRST OF MANY SUCH INFORMAL SESSIONS AFTER A LONG STRETCH IN WHICH SENIOR GOB OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN VERY RELUCTANT TO MEET. END SUMMARY.

BETTER ON COUNTERTERRORISM

2. (SBU) THE CHIEF OF MISSION (COM) TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE FIRST EVER VISIT TO THE EMBASSY BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER (DFM) KHIN MAUNG WIN (A 1985 FULBRIGHTER AND GRADUATE OF SAIS) TO DISCUSS SEVERAL KEY BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ISSUES. THE DFM HAD COME ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 9TH TO SIGN THE PRESIDENT REAGAN CONDOLENCE BOOK (SEPTEL), AND HE AGREED (AFTER A FEW MOMENTS OF INDECISION) TO COME UPSTAIRS FOR A GLASS OF SPRITE. IT WAS THE FIRST VISIT OF A SENIOR GOB OFFICIAL TO THE EMBASSY SINCE A PREVIOUS DFM CAME IN 1994 TO SIGN THE CONDOLENCE BOOK FOR THE LATE PRESIDENT NIXON. THE DCM AND A P/E OFFICER ALSO ATTENDED THE 30 MINUTE MEETING.

3. (C) THE CURRENT DFM VERIFIED FOR US WORD WE'D HEARD LAST WEEK THAT BURMA WAS PREPARED TO SIGN THREE MORE OF THE 12 UN COUNTERTERRORISM PROTOCOLS. BURMA IS A SIGNATORY TO EIGHT ALREADY, AND WILL LIKELY SIGN THE PROTOCOLS ON HOSTAGES, PROTECTED PERSONS, AND PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES BEFORE THE UNGA MEETING. ACCORDING TO THE DFM, THE "POLITICAL APPROVAL" FOR WAS IN PLACE AND THERE WERE JUST SOME "PROCESSES" TO COMPLETE BEFORE THE FINAL SIGNING. WHEN BURMA SIGNS THESE THREE ONLY THE SAFEGUARDING OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL PROTOCOL WILL REMAIN UNSIGNED.

SAME ON CONVENTION

4. (C) THE DFM BRIEFED ON A FEW KEY POINTS ON THE ONGOING NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION (NC). WHEN THE COM FIRST ASKED ABOUT THE DFM'S ROLE, HE LET SLIP THAT "THANKFULLY" HE HADN'T BEEN DRAFTED INTO DAILY ATTENDANCE AT THE PRISON-LIKE NC SITE (REFTELS). HE SAID, THAT THE NC PROCESS WAS MOVING ALONG THOUGH HE WOULDN'T HYPOTHEZIZE ON WHEN THE FINAL GUIDELINES FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE CONSTITUTION WOULD BE COMPLETE.

5. (C) THE COM ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY SIGNIFICANCE TO A RECENT SHIFT IN GOB COMMON-USE JARGON FROM NATIONAL "RECONCILIATION" TO NATIONAL "RECONSOLIDATION" WHEN DISCUSSING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DRAFT THE CONSTITUTION. HE REPLIED THAT THIS WAS INDEED AN INTENTIONAL SHIFT, REFLECTING THE GOB'S DESIRE TO USE A "STRONGER" WORD TO DESCRIBE THE NEWLY VIGOROUS EFFORT TO NOT JUST RECONCILE ETHNIC AND BURMAN GROUPS, BUT MERGE THEM TOGETHER IN A MORE COHESIVE UNION. TO US, THOUGH, IT SEEMS LIKE THE MASK SLIPPING TO REVEAL THE GOB'S REAL CONSTITUTIONAL INTENTIONS: BRING EVERYONE INTO THE FOLD WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT.

6. (C) THOUGH THE JARGON HAS CHANGED, THE DFM ADDED, THE GOB IS STILL INTENDING TO BE FLEXIBLE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPECIFIC DESIRES OF THE ETHNIC CEASE-FIRE GROUP DELEGATES. THOUGH THIS FLEXIBILITY MAY EXIST IN PRINCIPLE AND ALONG THE MARGINS, WE'VE SEEN NO EVIDENCE SO FAR THAT THE SPDC-CONTROLLED NC IS WILLING TO ENTERTAIN THE CORE DEMANDS OF THE CEASE-FIRE GROUPS FOR SOME KIND OF A FEDERAL SYSTEM (REFTEL).

WORSE ON ASSK

7. (C) THE COM ASKED WHETHER THE SPDC WAS CONTINUING ITS CONTACTS WITH AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND WHETHER OR NOT THE GOB VIEWED PARTICIPATION OF THE NLD IN THE NC AS STILL POSSIBLE.

THE DFM SAID THAT CONTACT WAS ONGOING, THOUGH HE DID NOT KNOW THE SUBSTANCE OF THESE MEETINGS, BUT THAT IT WAS PROBABLY "TOO LATE" FOR THE NLD TO PLAY ANY MEANINGFUL ROLE IN THE NC. THE COM CLEARLY TOLD THE DFM THAT NLD PARTICIPATION IN THE NC AND THE SPDC'S "ROAD MAP FOR DEMOCRACY" WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THE PROCESS TO HAVE ANY LEGITIMACY.

COMMENT: GOOD MEETING, PREDICTABLE CONTENT

18. (C) THOUGH LITTLE GOOD NEWS EMERGED FROM THE SHORT DISCUSSION, THE FACT THAT IT OCCURRED WAS VERY POSITIVE. NORMALLY THIS KIND OF HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OCCURS ONLY AFTER EXTENSIVE PREPARATORY WORK RESULTING IN A VERY STAGED AND CANNED EXCHANGE. THE COM URGED THE DFM TO MAINTAIN MORE OPEN AND INFORMAL LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE EMBASSY ON IMPORTANT BILATERAL ISSUES. THE DFM AGREED, AND SEEMED EARNEST IN HIS DESIRE TO DO SO. OF COURSE HE DOES NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE GOOD ON HIS PROMISE. END COMMENT.
MARTINEZ